



• phone: 202.833.0009 • fax: 202.833.0113 • www.prevent.org

1015 18th Street NW, Suite 200 • Washington, DC 20036-5215 •

April 16, 2004

Steve E. Phurrough, MD, MPA
Director, Coverage and Analysis Group
Office of Clinical Standards and Quality
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard, Mailstop C1-09-06
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Dr. Phurrough:

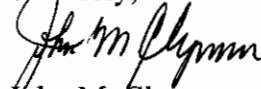
On behalf of Partnership for Prevention, I am writing to formally request Medicare coverage for tobacco cessation counseling as detailed in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service (PHS) *Clinical Practice Guideline. Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence*. This evidence-based protocol is a well-established, nationally-recognized intervention that has been refined over a period of many years, based on the findings of numerous scientific trials.

The benefits of tobacco-use cessation and the effectiveness of this intervention in achieving cessation are generally unquestioned by the mainstream medical profession. The protocol is endorsed and promoted by the American Medical Association, American Academy of Family Practitioners, and several state tobacco prevention programs. It has been adopted as a covered benefit by the U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Veterans Administration. For federal employees, the Office of Personnel Management recommends that insurers cover tobacco use treatment consistent with the PHS guideline, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield, the largest insurer of federal employees, changed its benefit to fully comply with the recommendations.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is itself sponsoring two initiatives—the Medicare Stop Smoking Program and Doctors' Office Quality—to study reimbursement strategies to increase delivery of tobacco-use cessation services to Medicare beneficiaries. Finally, coverage of cessation treatment under all forms of insurance, including Medicare, has been recommended by Secretary Thompson's *Steps to a Healthier U.S. Initiative* and the report of the Interagency Committee on Smoking and Health, Subcommittee on Cessation.

I appreciate your review and decision on this request.

Sincerely,


John M. Clymer
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